

March 11, 2020

Dear Charles River Center Community,

As you are aware, yesterday the Governor declared a State of Emergency in Massachusetts. This does not immediately effect our supports and services. This declaration will give his administration more flexibility and resources to respond to this evolving outbreak. We are awaiting specific guidance regarding group home operations that are due to come out today.

I want to share with you the steps we're taking at the Charles River Center to help protect the health and safety of our employees and persons-served, which is always our top priority.

As you know, COVID-19 or the Coronavirus, has progressed in the United States and abroad in recent weeks. It is a fluid situation for which we are currently taking a variety of precautionary measures and encouraging you to do the same. Our goal is to keep all of our person-served, employees, and families healthy and able to continue to provide uninterrupted support and services. Coronavirus spreads in the same manner as other airborne viruses such as the flu or common cold.

Actions we are taking:

- Actively participating in the Needham Emergency Planning Group
- Monitoring local, national and international information regarding the virus and keeping employees, families and other stakeholders informed
- Established an agency-wide leadership team to monitor, plan, communicate, and react to any impact to Charles River Center operations
- Updating and reviewing our Continuation of Operations Plans (COOP) to prepare for any larger outbreaks in areas where we serve the community
- Training and retraining employees and persons-served on Universal Precautions, including commonly known steps to stop all virus transmissions
- Monitoring and maintaining cleaning and personal protective equipment supplies known to be effective against the virus
- Training and communicating with managers to be prepared to address and communicate with the leadership team, all stakeholder questions and concerns
- Communicate with program participants' residential/day/families/staff/volunteers should anyone be confirmed for COVID, while observing HIPPA
- Developing protocols for temporary isolation of people who display symptoms until they can receive medical care

Actions you can take:

- Wash your hands and those of persons-served regularly with soap and water. When water is not available use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Clean surfaces and objects (e.g. phones, keyboards, tables, toilets, faucets, doorknobs, light switches) with disinfectant regularly
- Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing, within your elbow
- Dispose of used tissues immediately and wash your hands
- Keep hands away from the face (eyes, nose and mouth) as much as possible
- If you are sick, stay at home and notify your manager immediately
- Encourage others you come in contact with to follow the same guidelines

- Stay informed by reading your email communications, notices posted on the website, and information shared by the Charles River Center leadership team
- Notify a Charles River Center manager if you or someone in your family has traveled abroad recently
- Notify a Charles River Center manager if you or someone in your family has contracted the virus
- Communicate with a manager immediately if anyone in your care (i.e. a group home not operated by Charles River Center) contracts COVID-19
- Do not panic!

We feel deeply for those who have been affected by the virus. Thankfully, as of now, we're not aware of anyone in the Charles River Center community who has contracted COVID-19.

For updated information regarding the virus, please go to [mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov).

Precaution and planning are essential to keeping everyone safe and healthy. Thank you for doing your part. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Anne-Marie Bajwa
President/CEO